

Wow!

The art of living

Carolyn Curtis (left) has some advice on the post-Christmas state of mind that will have you feeling on top of the world

AFTER enjoying a relaxing Christmas break, returning to a normal routine can be mentally, emotionally and physically exhausting.

This is especially so for women who juggle many roles as mother, wife, housekeeper and career woman — not to mention wanting to look good, feel good, have time for their friends and children ... the list goes on and on.

Wouldn't it be wonderful not to arrive at the summer holidays a burnt out wreck? How can we look after ourselves better this new year?

Well let's begin by looking at the mind — have you ever noticed that your mind never stops thinking?

Worry usually takes up a large amount of time in the day. Our minds are constantly planning, thinking ahead and imagining every possible thing that could go wrong and trying to avoid that happening.

Living by clocks and timelines and usually doing more than one thing at a time (women are wonderful at that!), we often find that there are not enough hours in the day.

And then of course nobody can do things as well as we can so why bother even trying to hand over some of the chores to our families?

Are you one of those people who rush from home to get to work and rush from work to get

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home and while you are doing one job you are thinking about the next? If all this sounds familiar then it is no wonder that you are tired and stressed much of the time.

Well, I am here to tell you that it is possible to change, as they say I've been there, done that!

One of the most significant changes we can make is through practicing quietening our minds — that way everything does not build up in our heads.

And the good news is that even practicing this for just ten minutes a couple of times in the day and doing some deep breathing techniques as you go about your daily activities can make a difference.

You will find, as I have, that having done this everything else flows better in the day, you will panic less, feel more grounded and relaxed and yes, even find that you will get more done in less time because you are thinking more clearly because you will have let go of all the other junk in your head.

Regular practice of meditation and visualisation helps you cope better with everyday pressures and generally increases your

mental and physical wellbeing.

It can guard against stress-related symptoms such as hypertension, migraines and insomnia and, when practiced regularly, it can even take you one step further.

How often have you wished that you could react differently in situations, improve your relationships, feel happier and more relaxed about life?

Through the process of meditation, you learn to observe the body more consciously and, as you do so, you become more aware of the emotions and the tensions that you hold in your body and then physically let them go.

Just as our observing can lead us to a physical relaxing and releasing, so too it can help us to relax and let go of emotions such as fear, guilt, anxiety and even limiting beliefs about ourselves and about life, stripping away the layers and old habits and coming back to the self.

You become more aware of your values and your relationships to other people and the world more clearly.

By being more in touch with yourself you have a greater con-

trol over your own personality and therefore the quality of your own life.

Your ability to concentrate increases and creativity is enhanced.

Meditation teaches you the art of living more fully in the present moment through mindfulness, giving you a great sense of freedom from past concerns, helping you to focus on the here and now.

So why not make some changes in your life now, beginning this new year a new way. Learn to live life more fully and joyfully.

● Carolyn Curtis from Empowering Workshops, Cork, is giving a guided Meditation and Visualisation hour every Monday night in the new Meditation Centre in Bessborough, Blackrock, from 7.30-8.30pm.

Booking is not necessary.

Participants are asked to arrive by 7.25pm and wear loose, comfortable, warm clothing.

The cost is €10 a session.

For more details, contact Carolyn on 087-6419912, website address is www.empoweringworkshops.com